



Environmental Justice Strategic Plan



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Indiana Department of Environmental Management
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Vision Statement

No citizens or communities of the state of Indiana, regardless of race, color, national origin, income or geographic location, will bear a disproportionate share of the risk and consequences of environmental pollution or will be denied equal access to environmental benefits.

Mission Statement

IDEM shall work with Indiana communities to ensure that it develops and implements policies, programs and procedures that:

- Inform, educate and empower all people in our state to have meaningful participation in decisions which affect their environment;
- Reduce any cumulative disparate impact of environmental burden, including burdens from past practices, on people of color and/or low-income status; and
- Address IDEM's obligations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Key Implementation Principles

▶ Awareness and Sensitivity

IDEM will ensure that all staff involved in environmental decision making are educated regarding the nature of and the cumulative environmental burden on the population affected by those decisions.

▶ Public Participation

IDEM will continue to improve its efforts to put into place effective means for soliciting meaningful public input and providing opportunities to impact environmental decision making.

▶ Inclusiveness

IDEM will include all interested parties and governmental agencies in the process of fashioning and implementing an environmental justice strategic plan.

▶ Proactivity

IDEM will actively pursue resolutions to environmental justice disputes by facilitating or arranging for facilitation of those disputes between all of the interested parties.

▶ Communication and Education

The IDEM Environmental Justice Strategic Plan will have clear, concise, proactive and accessible communication and education as integral components.

▶ Sustainability

The IDEM Environmental Justice Strategic Plan, devised in partnership by IDEM and other stakeholders, will include clear, concise and proactive guidelines in order to provide for the ongoing sustainability of programs implemented pursuant to the strategy, including systemic evaluation measures.

Goals and Objectives for IDEM

Goal 1 *IDEM shall identify geographical areas of environmental justice (EJ) concern.*

Objective 1: IDEM shall obtain and integrate demographic and environmental data, including available relevant data possessed by other agencies, and make that information available to communities in an understandable and meaningful way.

Objective 2: IDEM shall develop a guidance document for the purpose of generating EJ and Title VI maps.

Objective 3: IDEM shall obtain appropriate hardware and software for developing and preparing EJ maps and produce such maps using the aforementioned guidance document.

Objective 4: IDEM shall designate an EJ map contact person.

Objective 5: IDEM shall produce understandable maps that show concentrations of people with low incomes and persons of color in Indiana integrated with environmental impacts on those populations.

Goal 2 *IDEM shall educate communities about environmental issues, the public's role as a participant in environmental decision making and the Department's statutory roles and responsibilities.*

Objective 1: IDEM shall develop a presentation module that can be used by communities and IDEM to educate the public about environmental issues.

Objective 2: IDEM shall develop and disseminate a citizen's guide to public participation in permitting and rulemaking to communities. In addition, IDEM shall evaluate the guide's content, readability and usefulness to communities and make changes as necessary.

Objective 3: IDEM shall publicize and offer workshops to communities to educate them about IDEM, environmental issues, permitting and public participation opportunities.

Goal 3 ***IDEM shall ensure IDEM staff members are educated regarding EJ issues and understand the relevance and applicability of those issues to their work.***

Objective 1: IDEM shall search for, collect and evaluate existing EJ training materials.

Objective 2: IDEM shall develop a customized training model and institute ongoing staff training to increase staff understanding and sensitivity to EJ issues and processes involved in decisions that are impacted by EJ concerns. The training should include information concerning: Clean Air Act; Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act; Clean Water Act; Safe Drinking Water Act; and Solid Waste Disposal Act issues.

Objective 3: IDEM shall evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the EJ training and make changes as necessary.

Goal 4 ***In IDEM decisions that involve EJ issues, including permitting decisions, IDEM shall facilitate the opportunity for all affected parties to communicate their concerns to the department and to each other.***

Objective 1: IDEM shall research ways, including an investigation of the successful experiences in other states such as Wisconsin and New Jersey, in which to implement a mediation program which will effectively provide a means for Indiana citizens to actively interact to resolve environmental disputes. This research shall result in a menu of implementation options which shall be evaluated by IDEM and external stakeholders.

Objective 2: IDEM shall draft, with affected community input, a protocol for mediation/facilitation of environmental disputes.

Objective 3: IDEM shall, before environmental decisions are made, actively facilitate the resolution of EJ disputes between communities and regulated entities during the up-front siting process for new and expanded facilities. This process shall consider all of the circumstances surrounding the decision, including past practices.

Goal 5 *IDEM shall, with community input, evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of existing public processes for environmental decision making.*

Objective 1: To gather community input, IDEM shall develop a survey to evaluate the effectiveness of existing public participation processes, which will be available at appropriate public forums and on the Web. All responses will be compiled, evaluated and used to make improvements in IDEM processes.

Objective 2: IDEM shall examine its permitting and rule making processes to determine at which points public participation occurs. IDEM shall thereafter identify areas that require improvement or enhancement.

Objective 3: With the assistance of a workgroup of the Indiana Environmental Justice Advisory Committee, hereinafter referred to as the “IEJAC” members, IDEM shall develop written plans to improve IDEM’s public participation processes which could include: enhanced public forum opportunities, expanded dissemination of information, developing tools for soliciting community input in order to inform agency decision making and bilingual outreach materials.

Objective 4: IDEM shall institutionalize within its procedures, more appropriate public processes for rule makings, facility permitting decisions or economic incentive packages that affect communities, including EJ areas of concern, or populations.

Objective 5: To ensure that environmental justice concerns are addressed in providing economic development packages and other forms of assistance to communities, IDEM shall support the establishment of an environmental justice subcommittee of the interagency group convened to foster IDEM's "Network for a Livable Environment" agency priority.

Goal 6 *IDEM shall seek out and involve other agencies as it addresses issues related to EJ.*

Objective 1: IDEM shall make its EJ strategic plan available to other agencies, so that they may use it as a model or starting point.

Objective 2: IDEM shall seek relevant data from other agencies and incorporate the data into EJ related projects.

Objective 3: IDEM shall make available IDEM's EJ training module, and/or invite staff from other agencies to attend IDEM's EJ training sessions.

Goal 7 *IDEM shall implement an effective EJ strategic plan for the department.*

Objective 1: The IDEM Environmental Justice Strategic Plan shall include a written commitment by the department to implement the plan, including milestones for integration throughout all environmental programs.

Objective 2: The implementation of the IDEM Environmental Justice Strategic Plan shall be included as a part of biannual environmental performance partnership agreements between the department and U.S. EPA Region 5.

Objective 3: IDEM shall create a process to assist citizens in resolving their concerns. Furthermore, IDEM shall evaluate the potential of implementing this process at each IDEM regional office.

Objective 4: IDEM shall create an ombudsman position to oversee the process as well as to serve as the department-wide clearinghouse for all EJ concerns. The ombudsman will be tasked with coordinating the concerns of all internal and external stakeholders.

Objective 5: IDEM shall periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the IDEM Environmental Justice Strategic Plan and its implementation of the plan through written evaluations (drafted using feedback from affected community groups) of the plan's success. IDEM shall also provide opportunities to adjust the plan, as needed, based on stakeholder feedback and results of evaluations.

Objective 6: IDEM shall address its work on EJ in appropriate publications and provide information via the Web.

Objective 7: IDEM shall create and support a permanent external EJ task force for the purpose of advising IDEM on the implementation of the IDEM Environmental Justice Strategic Plan.

Objective 8: To ensure that environmental justice concerns are addressed in brownfields redevelopment, IDEM shall support the establishment of an environmental justice subcommittee through the Interagency Brownfields Task Force. This subcommittee shall be comprised of the state and federal member agencies from the Interagency Brownfields Task Force and include representatives from community development, economic development, environmental justice, private industry and interested citizen groups.